

TAKE PRIDE[®] IN AMERICA

It's Your Land, Lend A Hand

"Service and volunteerism are an integral part of the American character."

--President George W. Bush

Take Pride in America[®] is a national partnership established by the U.S. Department of the Interior that aims to engage, support and recognize volunteers who work to improve our public parks, forests, grasslands, wildlife refuges, cultural and historical sites, local playgrounds and other recreation areas. Together we protect and enhance the special legacy all Americans share — our public lands that cover more than one in every three acres across the Nation.

The program originated in 1985 with Interior Secretary Donald Hodel. He recognized a growing problem with vandalism and looting of historical artifacts on public lands, and knew

there was too much land for Federal enforcement personnel to combat the problem alone. Hodel's solution was to raise awareness among the public of the negative effects caused by abusing public lands and resources; namely, they were robbing the American public of a shared birthright. He believed people had to step up and become stewards of their own lands.

In February 1986, President Ronald Reagan's message to Congress was that, "All Americans should take pride in their outstanding public lands and historic sites that belong to everyone." By 1990 the Take Pride program was codified.

In the following years, celebrity spokesmen were chosen to bring Take Pride's message to the public. Charles Bronson, Clint Eastwood and Lou Gossett Jr. delivered the



Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton plants flowers with children during an event designating Stockton, California a Take Pride in America City.

Take Pride in America Mission

- **Awareness:** instills in the public the importance of, and appreciation for, Federal, state and local lands and resources
- **Action:** invites the public to volunteer to help maintain and enhance our shared spaces
- **Awards:** honor those individuals and groups for a job well done.

message: "Bad guys abuse public land. Good guys save it."

During his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush established the U.S.A. Freedom Corps, a coordinating council helping Americans find service opportunities. He called for all Americans to "commit at least two years—4,000 hours over the rest of your lifetime—to the service of your neighbors and your nation."

"My call tonight is for every American to commit at least two years--4,000 hours over the rest of your lifetime--to the service of your neighbors and your nation....To sustain and extend the best that has emerged in America, I invite you to join the new USA Freedom Corps."

*---President George W. Bush
2002 State of the Union Address*



Clint Eastwood returned as the Take Pride in America spokesman in 2004.

Secretary of the Interior,



Volunteers from PricewaterhouseCoopers had fun cleaning up Hains Point in Washington, D.C.

Volunteering is Fun and Healthy

Volunteering with Take Pride in America is good for your well being. Getting outside and volunteering in your community results in a "win-win" situation—you get active and America gets that much better.

Gale A. Norton answered that call and Take Pride in America was re-launched in April 2003 under the U.S.A. Freedom Corps. President George W. Bush has made a strong commitment to encouraging citizens to public service. This initiative represents a range of opportunities for citizens to take active roles in their communities.

With more than 100 Charter Partners and new partners joining, Take Pride involves conservation, youth and recreation groups, top national corporations and organizations. They work with Federal, state and local governments to provide resources for communities.

Quick Facts

- 50 States and Guam participated in Take Pride in 2004
- More than 100 Take Pride Charter Partners
- 120 National Public Lands Day Take Pride events in 2004
- 26 honorees received the 2004 National Award; 15 were honored in 2003
- Nearly 500,000 volunteer hours were pledged to assist with fire-ravaged forests of Southern California
- More than 400,000 hours were pledged to assist with public lands projects as part of the Take Pride in Florida kickoff
- The Take Pride in America's City program launched in January 2004
- 1,672 Take Pride in America Gardens have been designated with the help of America the Beautiful Fund
- More than 450,000 Volunteer Guides were distributed to Federal and state agencies, groups and individuals

Take Pride has also gained support throughout the country. Governors from all 50 states and Guam belong to our Governor's Council, along with a growing network of Members of Congress and mayors from communities across the country who have elected to become a Take Pride in America City.

With continued participation on behalf of elected officials and other partners, Take Pride strives to promote community involvement at public lands events throughout the country.



President Bush helps volunteers repair trails in Colorado.

Annually, outstanding volunteers are recognized at the Take Pride in America National Awards Ceremony. In addition, Governors and Members of Congress may select volunteers from their state who have demonstrated a commitment to Take Pride's mission.



Great Outdoors Week brought volunteers of all ages to Washington, D.C.'s Theodore Roosevelt Island.



This young worker proves volunteering can be fun at any age.

Contact Us

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